United Nations A/55/981–S/2001/558

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
5 June 2001

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session
Agenda items 40, 56 and 94

The situation in the Middle East

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 4 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure of enclosing the final communiqué of the seventy-ninth session of the Ministerial Council of the Cooperation Council for the Gulf Arab States, which was held in Jeddah on 2 and 3 June 2001 (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were issued as a document of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40, 56 and 94, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jassim **Buallay**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 4 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventy-ninth session, held in Jeddah on 2 June 2001

On Saturday, 2 June 2001, the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its seventy-ninth regular session in Jeddah under the chairmanship of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Bahrain and Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim Al-Hujeilan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council stated that it had been moved by the death of Mr. Faisal al-Husseini, member of the Executive Committee [of the Palestine Liberation Organization] responsible for matters relating to Jerusalem, and it commended the lifelong devotion of the deceased to the service of his country, Palestine, and to the defence of Jerusalem. The Council expressed its condolences to His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, to the family of the deceased and to the fraternal Palestinian people.

In implementation of the instructions of the leaders of the GCC States framed with a view to promoting joint action to achieve the aspirations of the peoples of the region and strengthen security and stability, the Ministerial Council reviewed the outcome of the meetings of the ministerial and technical committees and the major developments that had taken place in connection with political issues and events at the regional, inter-Arab and international levels.

Economic affairs

The Council considered the report of the fifty-fourth meeting of the committee on financial and economic cooperation on measures for the establishment of the GCC customs union, the proposed expansion of the Economic Agreement and the work programme for completing the requirements for the implementation of

article 22 of the Economic Agreement and the establishment of the GCC monetary union. It considered the committee's recommendations relating to the elimination of obstacles to trade among member States and to negotiations on a collective basis with Arab trading partners.

The Council further considered the report of the thirteenth meeting of the committee on cooperation in matters concerning electricity and water and its discussion of the GCC electric power linkage authority. It also considered the report of the twelfth meeting of the ministerial posts and telecommunications committee and its discussion of the reduction of rates for settlements among telecommunications administrations in member States and of cooperation among GCC States with regard to a number of telecommunications issues and postal matters. It also considered the fifteenth annual report of the GCC standards organization.

Man and the environment

The Council considered the progress made in joint action in the fields of education, scientific research, the environment and health. The activities in question included: follow-up action on the resolutions of the Supreme Council in the field of curriculum development in public education; the measures taken for the publication of the standardized regime for the handling and management of hazardous chemicals and the standardized regime for health-care waste management; and agreements relating to the conservation of nature and natural habitats. The Council reviewed the steps being taken to establish a GCC food safety committee and the statute that will regulate its functioning.

Military matters

The Council considered the progress made in military cooperation and the achievements recorded, and it expressed its aspiration for continued successes in this field.

Political issues

The Council discussed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and the consequences of its occupation of Kuwait.

The Council expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the Iraqi political message that had been voiced by a number of senior Iraqi officials and of Iraq's arrogance towards and intimidation of its neighbours. It urged the Iraqi Government to desist from such irresponsible statements and to demonstrate its good faith in both word and deed.

In its concern to create appropriate conditions for the achievement and consolidation of security, peace and stability in the Gulf region, the Council renewed its call to Iraq to discharge in full its obligations under the Security Council resolutions relating to cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations high-level coordinator and the Tripartite Commission in devising an expeditious and definitive solution to the problem of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages and the return of all Kuwaiti property in its possession. The Council also urged Iraq to cooperate with the United Nations in

bringing the outstanding issues relating to weapons of mass destruction and monitoring systems to a satisfactory conclusion.

The Council called upon Iraq and the Security Council to engage in an exhaustive dialogue with a view to the discharge of these obligations in a just and comprehensive manner and in accordance with sound principles as a step towards the lifting of sanctions.

The Council stressed that Iraq must undertake to respect the security, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and that it must take all necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards the GCC countries if the region's security and stability are to be assured.

The Council called upon Iraq to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions with a view to ending the suffering of the Iraqi people, and it once again affirmed that it continued to welcome and to be prepared to participate in all humanitarian initiatives to mitigate that suffering.

The Council refers in this connection to the positive efforts that were made by the GCC States at the Arab Summit Conference held in Amman to reach agreement on a text calling upon the United Nations to lift the sanctions imposed on the Iraqi people. Iraq's rejection of the text, however, thwarted those efforts, and the Iraqi Government thus demonstrated once again that it has no desire for or interest in ending the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people.

The Council again affirmed that the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected and that there must be no interference in its internal affairs.

The Ministerial Council further pursued the mandate entrusted to it by the Supreme Council to examine all available peaceful means that might be conducive to the restoration to the United Arab Emirates of its legitimate rights in its three islands, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, that are still being occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was of the view that Iran's rejection of the many peace initiatives advanced to resolve the issue of the three islands, and most recently the efforts of the GCC Committee of Three, is not in accord with Iran's declared desire for dialogue and the elimination of tension, does not advance security and stability in the Arabian Gulf and impedes the improvement of relations between the two sides.

The Council again objected in the strongest terms to Iran's preparations to build dwellings for settlement on the three islands with a view to altering their demographic composition, in violation of the relevant 1949 Geneva Convention, and it demanded a halt to the construction of such settlement-related installations and the removal of those already built.

The Council reaffirmed its unconditional support for the claim of the United Arab Emirates to the three islands occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and its rejection of the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. It affirms the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands as an integral part of the country, the fact that it retains all of its rights in respect of those islands, and the Council's non-recognition of any sovereignty other than that of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, their

territorial waters, their airspace and the related continental shelf and exclusive economic zone.

The Council condemned Iran's encroachments and the military exercises that it conducts on the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates that it occupies and in their territorial waters, and it urges Iran to desist from conducting such exercises given that they are acts of provocation that pose a threat to security and stability in the Arabian Gulf region, constitute a source of great concern and are unhelpful in building confidence.

The Council supports all the steps being taken by the United Arab Emirates to restore its sovereignty over all three islands by peaceful means, in accordance with the principle of the collective security of the GCC countries. It exhorts the Islamic Republic of Iran to agree to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice as the body that is competent to resolve boundary disputes between States, especially since the United Arab Emirates has declared in advance that it will accept any Judgment delivered by the International Court of Justice in the dispute in question. Many States have placed their trust in the International Court of Justice for the resolution of their boundary disputes, and Iran itself has approached the Court on more than one occasion in advancing its claims.

The Ministerial Council considered the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, Israel's repressive practices, the blockade and starvation of the Palestinian people, the continuing assaults by the Israeli forces and Israel's attempts to destroy the peace process, all of which are causing greater instability and plunging the region into a maelstrom of violence. The Council urges the international community to make effective efforts to end Israel's practices, its violations and its defiance of the international will. The Council renewed its unconditional support for the Palestinian people and for the establishment of its independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, the restoration of all of its usurped rights and the return of the refugees to their homes in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, specifically Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and the principle of land for peace.

The Council welcomed the recommendations contained in the final communiqué of the Follow-Up and Action Committee [of the Council of the League of Arab States] at its emergency meeting held on 19 May 2001 and in the final communiqué of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Doha on 26 May 2001. It urges Israel to refrain from any action that may exacerbate the situation on the Syrian and Lebanese fronts and to embark on negotiations with a view to implementing a full withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the line of 4 June 1967, completing its withdrawal from Lebanese territory, including the Shab'a farmlands, to the internationally recognized boundary in accordance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), and releasing all the Lebanese prisoners and abductees being held in its prisons.

The Council urges the co-sponsors of the peace process, and especially the United States of America, to make greater efforts to halt the Israeli attacks so that negotiations may resume. It affirms its support for the Palestinian negotiators, and it appeals to the international community to make greater efforts to bring pressure to bear on the Israeli side and to require it to abide by the principles endorsed by the Madrid Peace Conference so that all legitimate Arab rights may be restored.

The Council holds Israel responsible for driving the Palestinian people into a state of frustration with its refusal to comply with the agreements reached, and it calls upon the permanent members of the Security Council to meet their responsibilities by halting the Israeli attacks, by ensuring that the blockade being maintained against the Palestinian people is lifted and by providing international protection.

The Council again calls upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council affirms once more that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.